

# 10 Issues Facing UNIVERSITY LEADERS Across the Sector

Which of these challenges is keeping **you** up at night?

EAB regularly asks university leaders about the challenges on their campuses, and the answers help drive our research agenda. We find that, while senior leaders are intimately familiar with their campuses' own issues, they often question whether they're worried about the right things. This infographic captures some of the top concerns facing university leaders around the globe. Use it to:

- Understand how your own campus's challenges fit with industry-wide trends
- Identify looming challenges you may have not yet encountered
- Validate the need for investments in new projects and major undertakings

## 1

### Preparing Students for AI and the **Future of Work**

- ▶ How can my institution infuse AI into every discipline to prepare students for an AI-fluent workforce?
- ▶ How can we prepare students for the potential issues around AI, such as privacy, data security, plagiarism, or biased responses?
- ▶ What can we do now to prepare our campus and students for a world of rapid technological change?



ONLY **3%**

of universities have developed a formal student policy on AI.

## 2

### Expanding **Mental Health and Wellbeing Support** for Students and Staff

- ▶ What inputs positively and negatively affect our students' mental health, and which factors can we actively influence?
- ▶ Where can we best deploy capacity and resources to meet students' and staff's mental health needs?
- ▶ How might public and government discussions of student mental health impact expectations of mental health support at our institution?



**65%**

of institutions intend to increase mental health support for students and staff.

## 3

### Creating and Managing a Portfolio of **New Credential Models**

- ▶ What effect will an increase in credential-granting bodies (e.g., coding academies, short-term certificate providers, etc.) have on enrolments at our institution?
- ▶ How will adopting new credential models advance or disrupt our current functions?
- ▶ How can we implement a sustainable review process for new credential offerings?



**40K**

students enrolled, and 1,200 students completed Google's IT Support Professional Certificate within the first 5 months of its launch.

## 4

### **Declining Trust** in Higher Education

- ▶ How can we demonstrate the value of a degree to prospective students, current students, and the public?
- ▶ What are the reasons for this decline of trust in higher education, and which issues can we actively influence?
- ▶ How can research, industry partnerships, and community engagement boost confidence in higher education in our own backyard?



**30%**

of the public in Australia and 28% of Gen Z in the UK have lost trust in universities.

## 5

### Scaling Tech-Enhanced, Student-Centred **Teaching Innovations**

- ▶ How can we encourage academic staff to adopt innovations that will help differentiate our institution?
- ▶ How should we evaluate the potential effectiveness of new technology and teaching tools?
- ▶ What is the optimal structure for instructional support, academic staff development, and educational technology support?



**90%**

of institutions offer professional development for teaching with technology and active teaching techniques.

## 6

### Moving Strategic Plans from 'All Things to All People' to **Nimble Prioritisation**

- ▶ What cognitive biases do we, as leaders, fall prey to when creating strategic plans?
- ▶ Is our strategic plan forward-looking, or are we stuck trying to improve current structures that may not be relevant in the future?
- ▶ Is our strategic plan driven by outdated or misaligned metrics that do not advance higher-level priorities?



**65%**

of COOs view articulating strategy better as an essential priority for their team and their institution in the next five years.

## 7

### Diversifying the Pipeline of **Future Academic Staff**

- ▶ What changes can we make to undergraduate education to encourage underrepresented students to seek a career in academia?
- ▶ How can we improve our PhD programmes to promote underrepresented student access and success?
- ▶ How should we reform recruiting, hiring, and career advancement practices to promote diversity and inclusion?



**1%**

of university lecturers in Australia are indigenous, and 1% of UK lecturers are Black.

## 8

### **Fierce Competition** for Talent with Strategic and Digital Skills

- ▶ How can we attract top talent with the necessary technical and strategic skills in an increasingly competitive hiring market?
- ▶ What support mechanisms can help academic and professional staff avoid disengagement or burnout, especially in departments with high turnover?
- ▶ How can we prevent competent staff from being poached by other organisations inside or outside the sector?



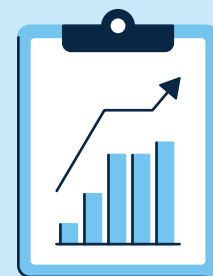
**79%**

of institutions in 2022-2023 had employee turnover at a higher or comparable rate to the previous year.

## 9

### Calibrating Institutional **Resource Allocation Models**

- ▶ How should we manage subvention for mission-critical units without becoming financially unsustainable?
- ▶ Does our current model create financial accountability for units, safeguard mission-critical activities, and advance strategic goals?
- ▶ How do we convince stakeholders to adopt needed changes and manage the transition to a new budget model?



**63%**

of institutions report they're not currently in a position of financial sustainability.

## 10

### Eliminating **Academic and Administrative Pain Points** for Students

- ▶ What policies and administrative structures frustrate students the most?
- ▶ Why are some academic programmes causing more graduation delays or higher non-completion rates than others?
- ▶ How can we best support students and promote timely degree completion?



Most countries have a degree completion rate below

**50%**

with only a few topping 70%.

Note: Sources available upon request.